

# St Vincent's School for Blind and Partially Sighted Children

Policy Document Title:	Whistle Blowing Policy
To be read in conjunction with:	Disciplinary Policy and Procedure Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy Safeguarding Statement Child Protection Procedures Keeping of records and reporting of incidents
Updated:	07/09
To be reviewed:	07/10

## St. Vincent's School Mission Statement:

*Inspired by the example of St Vincent, we work together in a safe and caring atmosphere, where a high standard of education and care are provided.*

*We encourage a sense of achievement, self worth, moral responsibility and mutual respect, honouring all faith traditions and beliefs. Each one of us in our community is special and unique. Gifts and talents are valued and nurtured through all our work.*

*We are outward looking in our approach to the wider educational and social community and we encourage all our young people to become independent and to integrate fully into society.*

## Policy and Procedure

This policy details the procedures to be followed when an alleged matter of serious concern perpetrated by a member of staff has been observed and reported. This is known as "whistle-blowing".

It is the policy at St Vincent's School to encourage the reporting to management of all matters of serious concern involving a member of staff, and for persons to feel that they can do so freely and without fear of reprisals or intimidation. 'Matters of Serious Concern' will include, but may not be limited to the following:

- ❖ Professional malpractice
- ❖ Abuse of a pupil
- ❖ Criminal activities (theft/embezzlement/assault, etc)
- ❖ Failure to comply with any legal obligation

- ❖ Dangers to Health and Safety
- ❖ Discrimination due to race, gender, ethnicity.

Persons reporting such incidents can include the following:

- ❖ Fellow staff members (peers)
- ❖ Professional person acting on behalf of the children (advocate/Minister of Religion etc.)

Where an incident of serious concern is alleged, the person making the allegation must report this directly to the Principal. In the case of serious concern regarding the Principal, then another member of the Strategy and Development Group (SDG) will be informed. A member of the Governing Body may support the SDG. He/she will be assured that appropriate enquiries will be made to establish the nature/reality of the incident, and that such enquiries will be carried out discreetly and in confidence. Wherever possible, the identity of the person reporting the incident will be kept anonymous.

Where preliminary enquiries show that further investigations need to be made, then the Principal will inform the staff member against whom the allegations have been made.

Where the alleged offence is of a serious nature, the following action will be taken:

- ❖ The staff member at the centre of the allegation may be suspended immediately on full pay, pending the outcome of the investigation. The staff member will be informed of the necessity for this action and will be assured that at this point, there is no inference of guilt.
- ❖ The matter will be reported to Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Board's (LCSB), Local Allegations Designated Officer (LADO).
- ❖ Report the matter to the Police and Child Protection Co-ordinator if appropriate.
- ❖ Report the matter the Chair of Governors.
- ❖ Report the matter to the OfSTED.

- ❖ The Principal will undertake a full investigation, interviewing all parties concerned in the allegation. This may include other staff and a pupil's family, relatives and advocates as appropriate.

### **Following completion of the investigation**

- ❖ If the allegations are justified, the staff member concerned will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure through to summary dismissal, as appropriate. Criminal charges may be brought by the Police or other parties, depending upon the circumstances.
- ❖ If the allegations are not proven, the staff member will be restored to full duties, all parties being informed of the findings of the investigation.
- ❖ Personal support/advice will be given to any employee involved in the allegations – without bias.
- ❖ Where the allegation is not proven, but has proven to be a malicious action on the part of the accusing party, then the accuser will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action per the Disciplinary Procedure. This may involve discretionary re-deployment of the accuser's duties, or summary dismissal, as deemed appropriate.

If the investigation results in the prosecution and conviction of the staff member, this result must be communicated, in writing to the OfSTED for consideration of inclusion in the Child Protection Register, List 99, ISA and the CRB register.

### **Guidelines for staff who need to Whistleblow**

The Management of St Vincent's will ensure that pupils are safe from physical, financial, material, psychological or sexual abuse, neglect, discriminatory abuse or self-harm or inhuman or degrading treatment through deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance as stated in our written policies.

## **When to Whistleblow**

All employees and health/social professionals have a duty of care to our pupils who are entitled to receive safe and competent care.

- ❖ If you have good reason to believe that a child/ren require protection from harm, you should act quickly.
- ❖ You should inform your line Manager immediately if it comes to your attention that a pupil has, or may have been harmed, for example:
  - a. Sustained injury at the hands of another person.
  - b. Suffered loss or damage to his/her personal property.
  - c. Been deprived of treatment or care, food, comforts, dignity, benefit etc., to which he/she is entitled.
  - d. Been victimised or harassed in any way.
  - e. Been deprived of basic rights to a service, which falls short of what can reasonably be expected.

## **How to Whistleblow**

- ❖ Take the matter to the person to whom you are responsible, who will support you in your concerns.
- ❖ If you feel that the response given by that person is inappropriate, you should refer the matter to the Principal, Head of Service or Duty Head.
- ❖ If, for any reason, you feel unable to follow the step detailed above, you should report your concerns directly to either:
  - a. The Chair of Governors
  - b. OfSTED

## **What you can expect to happen**

- ❖ That your concerns will be listened to and acted upon in an appropriate manner.
- ❖ That the pupil's safety and confidentiality will be maintained.
- ❖ That an investigation will be carried out discreetly and in confidence.
- ❖ That, wherever possible, your identity will be kept anonymous.

- ❖ That you may be expected to write a statement and attend any subsequent disciplinary or legal proceedings as a witness.
- ❖ That you can expect statutory employment protection when disclosing information reasonably and responsibly in the public interest.

At any stage seek the advice of, or involve, your professional Association/Union representative, or OfSTED.